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THE
TWO KENTUCKIANS,

BY S. C. MERCER.

Read by Mrs. Irwin Dugan before the
- Filson Club, Louisville, Ky.

LOUISVILLE, KY.
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1901.



COL. R. T. DURRETT, President of the Filson Club.

THE TWO KENTUCKIANS.

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Read by Mrs. Irwin Dugan before the June Session of the
Filson Club, Louisville, Ky.

JEFFERSON DAVIS—First and last President of the Southern Confederacy; born in Christian County, Ky., June 3, 1808; died in New Orleans December 6, 1889.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN—Fourteenth President of the United States; born in Hardin County, Ky., February 12, 1809; assassinated in Ford's Theater, April 14, (Good Friday), 1865.

The sky of the Southland with grief is o'ercast,
Bitter tears down the cheeks of the brave trickle fast;
The moss-streamered oaks of Beanoir bow their head,
Their Master is fallen, their Chieftan is dead.

Wake, soldier! As thou liest outstretched on thy bier
Does the warwhoop of Black Hawk not startle thine ear?
Seest not yon long Mexican Lancers array
At Buena Vista, rush fierce to the fray?

Clay—Webster—O, chief, are thy pulses unstirred
When the mighty debate in the Senate is heard?

Hark! Sumter's loud tocsin! Saw the world e'er the like.
For Freedom and Union and Southland they strike:
Grant, Lee, Meade and Johnston like Titans engage,
And the Lost Cause departs like a ghost from the stage.

Once, in Senate encounter, in battle's fierce brunt,
Thy plume, like Navarre's, streamed full high in the front,
Thou wert once like Scotch Bruce, of inflexible will.
Unyielding, though conquered, and resolute still,
In field, or in council, with, sword, tongue, or pen.
The moulder of ideas, the leader of men.

'Tis past, like a dream of the dawning on air,
For thee, this world's pageant of Vanity Fair,
'Tis faded—those phantoms and dreams of the past.
And crape ties the flag as it falls to the mast:
The dirge wails its sorrow to dead ears in vain:
The pallbearers' flag is the flag of the train;
The traveler's baggage lies all in one chest,
Whose check is a coffin-plate lettered "At Rest."
And Metairie's vault opes its dark narrow berth
For the cold, pallid earth which returns to the earth.
As I rode o'er the mountain I saw not how high
Its pine-covered summit ascended the sky:
'Twas a mere undulation that rose from the plain.
But as journeying on I beheld it again,
The veil of Omnipotence spread like a shroud
On its brow that looked down on the loftiest cloud:
So our lives were too near to those lives which expired
When the battle of freedom our continent fired
To measure their valor and virtue aright:
Our vision is dim when too close to the light.

Thou Lincoln, sad martyr, just, generous, brave,
A hero of heroes Omnipotence gave
To men when she molded thy gaunt, rugged face:
Like Cromwell, no smooth diletante in grace,
But counting all power, glory, life itself naught,
Till the duty assigned thee by heaven was wrought.

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The ages have brought forth no greater than he :
His soul, like the broad, irresistible sea,
Was a blending of majesty, sweetness and grace :
Himself he forgot in his love for his race.
The truth which he uttered all time will applaud.
For his lips caught their flame from the altar of God.

Who can love in this life, and yet truly be wise?
Who can hate and still see with unprejudiced eyes?
Our passions envelope our visions with mist,
Their whirlwinds transport wherever us they list:
To tenderly love and judge all hearts aright,
Belongs to one only—the Father of Light,
Who sits on the throne with white radiance burning
In whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.

Fallen, fallen, is the storm-shattered oak of the South !
Fallen, fallen, is the strong, stately pine of the North !

One combatant loses, another wins,
Christ have mercy on both and forgive them their sins :
And if a man conquer, or if he should lose,
'Tis naught, if the Great Judge his mercy refuse.

And now, all unheeding earth's praises or blame,
Thy two sons, Kentucky, repose in their fame:
The victor struck down while the jubilant cheer
Of honor and victory rang in his ear :
The vanquished who suffered in silence his lot,
When the empire and glory he dreamed of were not,
Richmond and Springfield have taken to rest
The children, Kentucky, who nursed at thy breast.
O, Hardin and Christian ! the homes of the great,
Forgetfulness veils through the satire of fate,
While fame blazons far to the ends of the earth
The log huts which gave to your progeny birth.
The leaders of millions lie helpless and lone,
As the soldiers, who perished unnoticed, unknown,
Take them tenderly, dear mother earth, to thy breast,
To repose in the "windowless palace of rest."

I hear, as I stand pressed with grief by your graves,
A voice like the roar of tumultuous waves.

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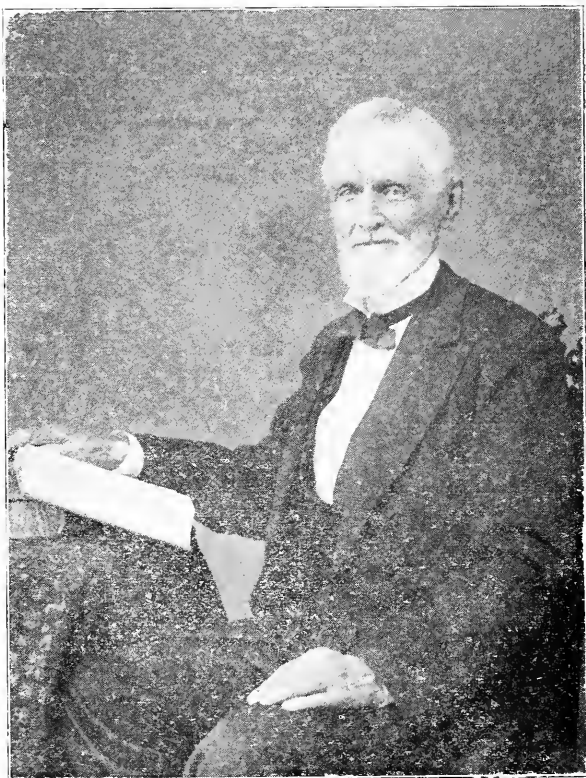
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JEFFERSON DAVIS. President of the Southern Confederacy.

And memory's harp, with its mystical strings,
Proclaims like the rushing of infinite wings,
How precious that flag by our fathers unfurled,
White flower of chivalry! Light of the world!
Float ever, proud banner of freedom sublime,
Till the Judgment's last trump sounds the ending of time.

The Christmas Eve bells were all ringing aloud,
And I dreamed that I saw on God's bow in a cloud—
Its red, like the rose dawn of Easter's bright day;
Its blue, like the love which abideth for aye:

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN, Fourteenth President of the United States.

Its gold, the reflection of Paradise street:
Its white, the effulgence of Christ's mercy seat—
An angel, calm, radiant, of presence august,
The great golden balance of mercy adjust,
And millions of martyrs on battlefield slain,
Like the voice of the ocean, repeated the strain:
"O, States of the Union, all warfare shall cease:
Christ lifts o'er the nations the banner of Peace,
As the prism-banded Bow of the sky stanch'd the Flood,
Its earth-child, the Flag, ends the deluge of blood,
War's death-dealing cloud has rolled harmlessly by.

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And Peace, with her olive branch, smiles from the sky.
Forever is silenced dissension's wild roar:
The demon of hate rends the Union no more."
And, lo! the bells answered from valley and hill:
"PEACE, PEACE UPON EARTH, AND TO ALL MEN GOOD WILL."



AFTER THE REUNION,

BY S. C. MERCER.

In Louisville, June 1, 2, 3, attended by crowds, who walked in concord and good fellowship, amid brilliant and abundant decorations of the Stars and Stripes, intertwined with the Conquered Banner, the memorial of a result buried under the dust of a whole generation.

Take down the arch, whose many-colored lights,
Tinted with rainbow flash our gala nights,
Remove the banners from the outer wall,
The golden key upon the City Hall.
Farewell to you, grim veterans, we shall see
No more your faces, noble U. C. V.'s.
But O, my heart is sorrowful and sore
For the loved dead whom we shall see no more.
O, Zollicoffer, true to trust,
Ned Meriwether, gallant, just,
What tears bedew your honest dust!
My heart, brave Jackson, mourns for thee,
Rose of Kentucky chivalry;
And Courtland Prentice, whose bright eye
Vanished, like rainbow from the sky:
Fair Paradise, beneath thy tree

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Rest Stephens, Hatton, Hanson, Lee :
Ben Hardin Helm, thou, too, hast rest
In the Valhalla of the blest.
And may I turn to deck thy grave,
Young Ellsworth, rash and dauntless Zouave ?
Grant, as magnanimous as brave,
Lytle, the soldier without guile,
Who sang of Anthony, misled
By the swart sorceress of the Nile,
Then dropped in death his shining blade :
Lincoln, who by assassin fell :
Heaven bless them all and rest them well !
Desist—to name each shining light,
Would far outlast a Lapland night.

Fold up the conquered banner, Father Ryan,
Thou dying swan of the Confederacy,
Mother of Sorrows, safe beyond the stars,
Lift him, sweet poet of the Stars and Bars.
By Babel's stream, the exiles' harp of Zion,
No sweeter, sadder music breathes to me,
Than his despairing, wailing melody,
Sweet as Ophelia's plaint in lunacy—

“He is dead and gone, lady
He is dead and gone,
At his head a green grass turf,
At his heels a stone :”—

The hopeless wailing of a hidden smart,
The deathless death-song of a broken heart,

Yet, is this not the hour for dark despair.
Freedom and hope and trust are everywhere.
Unfurl the Stars and Stripes, let its folds sweep
Victor o'er solid land and rolling deep.
While our glad lips repeat on every hand
The song of Peace through a united land !

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S. C. MERCER, "For Freedom and Nationality," 1852.

THE CONQUERED BANNER.

BY FATHER ABRAM J. RYAN.

"Furl that banner! True, 'tis gory,
Yet 'tis wreathed around with glory,
And 'twill live in song and story.

Though it's folds are in the dust:
For it's fame on brightest pages
Penned by poets and by sages
Shall go sounding down the ages.
Furl its folds though now we must."

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